

LOADSTAR LETTER #49

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

Driven Remembers John Kaiser, Waveform of Millennium in Excerpts from Driven.

Robin Harbron is a new father

Looking Over The Horizon: Daniel Dallmann's SlipDemo
by Gaelyne R. Gasson

Skinning A Cat The Other Way: When proper code refuses to work, try it another way.
By Jeff Jones

Covert Programming With The CIA
By Robin Harbron.

The Buffer Bug In Ebud: Yes, even great programs can have bugs.
By Jeff Jones

Why You Probably Shouldn't Mention Uuencode To A PC User: Commodore Internet users are generally more adept than PC users.
By Jeff Jones

Commodore Outliners: generating automatic outlines with TWS and other word processors
By John Elliot

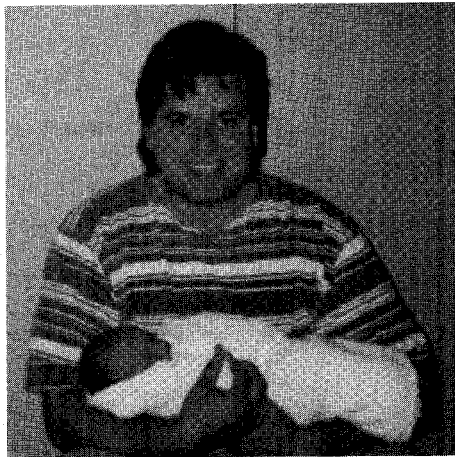
Bookmarks
By John Elliott

Letters To The Editor
Tasteless Spam Of The Year

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Robin with his new daughter

Robin Harbron Was Fruitful And Multiplied

Rianna Lillian Harbron was born Tuesday, August 19th, 1997 at 7:07 p.m. She was 9 pounds, 5 ounces, 21.5 inches long, but has reportedly gained since then. Said Robin, the father, "Carla and I are extremely happy to announce the birth of our first child. Both Carla and Rianna are healthy and happy.

More photos are located at <http://www.tbaytel.net/macbeth>

Driven Remembers John Kaiser, Waveform of Millennium

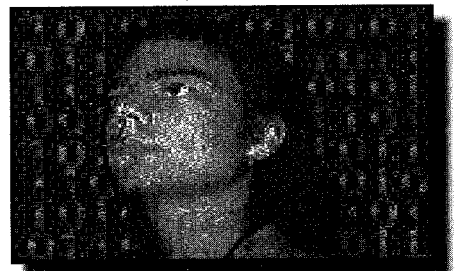
Excerpts from Driven.

Driven reported that John Kaiser died last month after a long bout with Hodgkin's lymphoma. John, who went by the handle Waveform, a member of the Millennium demo group, released several demos including Waveness 1 and 2. He was working on Waveness 3 and his game, but his illness overtook him. According to Driven he was only 24, and had been battling cancer all his life. The hospital couldn't find out exactly what was wrong with him. He developed pneumonia over the winter, and after recovering from the pneumonia was still not well. He simply deteriorated. One close friend speculated that the radiation therapy had taken its toll.

A special edition of Driven was dedicated as a tribute to John Kaiser, known

to most of us by his C-64 scene handle, Waveform. This edition of Driven appears on the Internet as well as the latest Star Extra #4. This was a heartfelt memorial of a friend spanning 122 packed blocks of text, music and graphics. It included an intro screen coded by Suraklin/MLM from a graphic created by Waveform and a poem authored by Zig. Roy Batty/Millennium created the logo and music for this special edition; the tune was originally intended for a game Wave was developing but never finished.

The special edition included a great number of heartfelt thoughts and feelings about John and his life from many of his close friends and from those who did not know him as well, but all of whom wanted to share their memories of him. We hope you accept this tribute not as a memorial to his death but as a



John Kaiser From Driven Opening screen

celebration of his life and how it affected ours lives and our world. LadyG spoke of him, "He's the most brilliant person I've ever met. Of course, if you've seen his work, you should already know he's brilliant." John also shared his knowledge of C-64 programming with anyone who asked. Fungus commented, "John was a really nice guy and was always willing to help me with code and stuff." Local-H stated: "I really didn't know much about Wave, but I did know that he was a good man, a good coder, and he really helped several beginning coders start off in the scene." NateD said: "John was an excellent coder and has helped many users get started programming for the C-64." Zig recalls, "After that first IRC day, no question was too silly, nor went unanswered. Wave was always there with a happy, helping

hand." Deathlok noted, "He was always around and willing to talk about almost anything, including my personal problems. There aren't too many people around the scene these days that would take the time to do something like this." As Zig said, "There wasn't a soul he wouldn't help whether it be coding related or otherwise."

John said in his brief autobiography written for the Driven page only 6 months ago: "My Commodores live their lives at 60-Hz, and so do I. I have made it my personal mission to have as much fun as possible in the NTSC scene and will do what I can to put as much life and energy into it as possible." No one could ever ask for more than this... Zig expressed much of what we have talked about here so eloquently in her poem:

*Waveform has been taken from us...
Let's cry no more tears,
for the tears that we cry
are for ourselves and our loss...*

*Instead, let's celebrate the happiness
Wave gave us while he was with us,
for that's what he'd want...*

*Let's be thankful we were privileged...
He was our friend...*

*Let's be thankful for the gifts
he bestowed upon us while he was here...
Let's continue to share these gifts...
For it's with these very gifts
that he'll always be with us.*

Looking Over The Horizon

By Gaelyne R. Gasson

Over the last few years we've been waiting for a graphical World Wide Web browser for the Commodore. Funny thing is, what many seem to "forget" is that in order to actually USE a graphical Web browser, first we need to deal with the connection side of things. What we need first is either a PPP (Point-to-Point Protocol) or SLIP (Serial Line Internet Protocol) connection to be written, and a number of people have been working on this for sometime now.

Daniel Dallmann has had a demo version of his SLIP interface available for over a year (<http://rpool1.rus.uni-stuttgart.de/~etk10217/C-64.html>), and **Arkanix Labs** (<http://www.arkanixlabs.com/menu.html>) has stated they have a program that should be available by mid 1997 named **NetStack** that includes SLIP. Unfortunately, as I type this it's past the mid-1997 mark, so it's hard to say when this will

be available.

Other programmers are racing to finish up their projects too, so it's possible a newer program may reach the market first. NetStack is set to be sold commercially for \$14.95 US and will require a SwiftLink or Turbo232 cartridge and an REU (Ram Expansion Unit). A developer pack will be included so software can be written to use the connection.

We've become used to using one terminal program and then accessing other Internet-related programs on our Internet Service Provider (or ISP for short). When the day comes that Commodore PPP or SLIP access is available to us, we will also need programs to do the same things on the Net that we've become accustomed to using through our Internet provider. Along with a graphical Web browser, we will also need a telnet

program (so we can telnet to other Internet sites or make use of our existing Unix shell accounts), and programs for Email, FTP, IRC and gopher... and that's just a start. As soon as (if not before) we have a graphical web browser, we also need a graphical HTML editor to go with the browser. This is exciting for several reasons. Once a reliable PPP or SLIP connection for the Commodore is established, we'll be able to pick and choose the programs we use to make use of Internet features.

I can see the day coming when there will be various different Commodore Internet utilities all vying for us to use them. Programmers have plenty of ideas to choose from with the list above. It won't (or shouldn't) matter if we use Joe Schmoe's neat Email program with Peter Blogg's PPP connection.

The basic concept is that once the connection is established, other

THE INTERNET FOR COMMODORE C64/128 USERS 2ND EDITION

BY GAELYNE R. GASSON
ISBN: 0-646-32207-9

\$29.95

The only C= 64/128 Internet reference guide, this 296 page manual takes you through hardware and software needed, how to get online and what you can do once you're there. It covers Email, World Wide Web, FTP, IRC, Telnet, Newsgroups, C= files, archives, and more.

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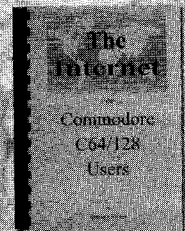
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programs make use of the connection to do their individual jobs. In one online session we could find ourselves using programs written by several different programmers. We will have choices and options that weren't available to us in the past, and programmers can work on one or two projects and really excel at it instead of trying to pack it all into one program. I'm sure there will also be suites of programs and utilities to use as well. For instance, if a programmer has a keen interest in IRC, chances are he (or she) will develop an IRC program that they really like to use, and that will benefit everyone.

Daniel Dallmann's SlipDemo

To get a taste of what's to come, I checked out the SlipDemo on Daniel Dallmann's website (<http://rpool1.rus.uni-stuttgart.de/~etk10217/C-64.html>). A well-written documentation file is included on the site that explains what SLIP is, in layman's terms, and describes what we can do when we use it. The rest of the file describes how to use the demo. In a way, labeling the program as a "demo" is a misnomer, as there are many things you can do with it, yet it's all hands-on experience and not for those who are used to menu driven programs. In order to use the demo, you need to have either a SwiftLink or Turbo232 interface or Daniel's 9600 baud User Port interface (the schematics for this are also on his web site). Because the SlipDemo doesn't have its own dialer, you'll need a C-64 term program such as Novaterm to begin the initial call. You also need to have access to an Internet provider that allows SLIP connections. I had to contact my system administrator to ask for a SLIP account to be set up (usually this doesn't cost extra, but you may want to ask just to be certain). When you have SLIP access, you will have a username and password (these may or may not be the same as you use when you log in with a term program), and an IP address. The IP address is an identifier each computer on the Internet has. Your Internet provider may give you an IP address to use each time you use your SLIP account, or if your provider uses a dynamic SLIP server, you may be given the IP address for the current session when you log in. The IP address will appear as "123.123.123.123" but will use different numbers, of course. If your system sends

a different address each time you login, be sure to keep paper and pen handy to jot the number down. Once you've connected and have logged in, you no longer need to use the term program and can exit it - but do so without disconnecting from your Internet provider. If using Novaterm, just select "exit terminal".

The next step is to load the SLIPdemo. The program will ask for your IP address and it has an easy to understand user interface for typing it in. It will then display a menu of options to use. It also asks for the IP address of the IRC server, but this is already filled in with a working example for you to use, so you can just press return at this option. A menu of 5 items appears:

- 1) telnet
- 2) passive telnet (telnetd)
- 3) IRC
- 4) TCP/IP setup
- 5) TCP/IP statistics

The documentation explains that by using telnet and various port numbers with an IP address, you can access your UNIX account, send or read Email, get pages from the World Wide Web and use IRC.

The passive telnet (telnetd) option allows you to let others telnet to your C-64. Daniel has included an IRC client that interprets commands sent from the IRC server and sends back your responses. TCP/IP setup presents the same IP address questions as when the program was first run. The last option tells you the number of packets of information that have been received and sent.

Reading Email or accessing the Web isn't quite as smooth as it sounds, as you're directly accessing the POP, Sendmail and Web server programs. Since there's no menu style interface, you must type the commands to retrieve Email or Web pages manually. The mail or web pages stream across the screen and disappear, as currently there's no provision to save the files to disk, or to display them with paging. What it does offer though, is the hope that an interface will be developed to make these options easier to use.

Personally, I can't wait for a program to handle sending and receiving Email, as it's one of the most basic Internet related activities and it gives us the ability to communicate with others. Something else I'd like to see included with the demo is documentation for programmers on how to add programs that will work with the SLIP connection.

Wrap Up

The groundwork is being laid and soon we'll have additional Internet access and programs to challenge us. It will be interesting to see how some programs (such as Email, Newsgroup readers and FTP programs etc.) will end up being laid out... there are many ways to tackle these jobs and no two programmers do things alike. Even though everyone wants a graphical Web browser, I'm looking forward to seeing how other programs are going to be designed and presented. Daniel Dallmann has already proven that SLIP access isn't impossible... now it's just a matter of time.

Skinning A Cat The Other Way

By Jeff Jones

What follows is a routine I've used for years. It was probably written in the late 80s, and it rounds a number to two decimal places and returns it in a string variable instead of a real variable. I need a string because BASIC V2 won't print 12 as 12.00 or 12.1 as 12.10. The formula, $a = \text{int}(a * 100 + .5) / 100$, is a programming staple across platforms, but the PRINT USING command, included in BASIC V7, is sadly missed in Commodore 64 land.

Line 40000 rounds the number to max two decimal places and then assigns it to A-string. How does it round?. Say $a = 49.93689$ and we run it through line 40000

```
Original problem: a= int(49.93689*100+.5)/100
Multiply times 100: a= int(4993.689+.5)/100
Add .5 to product : a= int(4994.189)/100
Convert to integer: a= int(4994)/100
Divide by 100   : a= 49.94
```

By adding .5 to the number, we round up. You might think this could destroy the integrity of your numbers. After all a number in your spreadsheet is a hard number! You don't want .5 added to every number. Well actually the .5 is only added to your number *after* it's multiplied by 100. That .5 addition is then divided by 100 and if anything is left, it's truncated by the int(x) command. See how this routine leaves 45.5 as 45.5

```
Original problem : a= int(45.5*100+.5)/100
Multiply times 100: a= int(4550+.5)/100
Add .5 to product : a= int(4550.5)/100
Convert to integer: a= int(4550)/100
Divide by 100   : a= 45.5
```

ROUND AND FORMAT

```
40000 a=int(a*100+.5)/100:a$=str$(a)
40010 l=len(a$):ifa=int(a)thena$a$+".00":return
40020 ifmid$(a$,l-1,1)=". "thena$a$+a$+"0":return
40030 return
```

You might think that 99.99 would be rounded up to 100. It isn't.

```
Original problem : a= int(99.99*100+.5)/100
Multiply times 100: a= int(9999+.5)/100
Add .5 to product : a= int(9999.5)/100
Convert to integer: a= int(9999)/100
Divide by 100 : a= 99.99
```

Even 99.994 won't round up.

```
Original problem : a= int(99.994*100+.5)/100
Multiply times 100: a= int(9999.4+.5)/100
Add .5 to product : a= int(9999.9)/100
Convert to integer: a= int(9999)/100
Divide by 100 : a= 99.99
```

This is why we add .5 to the product. You don't round up unless you reach the threshold of .5. Let's try again with 99.995

```
Original problem : a= int(99.995*100+.5)/100
Multiply times 100: a= int(9999.5+.5)/100
Add .5 to product : a= int(10000)/100
Convert to integer: a= int(10000)/100
Divide by 100 : a= 100
```

40010 stores the length of the string (how many digits in the number). Next it checks to see if the number is an integer. If so, it tacks a ".00" onto the string and returns. Line 40020 checks to see if there's a decimal point one from the end of the string. If so, it tacks on one zero to make the decimal point two from the end. If there are indeed two decimal places then the routine simply returns.

Recently I used this routine in a helpware program. It worked well as I developed the program, but failed when I compiled the program. With greater mysteries left unsolved in the universe, I never bothered to research why, but the routine above, rounded perfectly except

when I used 3, 5, 11, and a few other integers. Somehow in the compiled version it failed to see that $x=\text{int}(x)$ when $x=3$ and many other numbers. This happened only when I compiled with the Abacus Basic 64 compiler. I had to rectify this so I went back to the routine and changed the logic. Obviously Abacus had a problem with the code one way. I had to figure out a way of getting the same job done without aggravating the Abacus bug. Take a look at line 40010 in the replacement code.

In the alternate code, I check the length of the A-string against its integer version. If they match then the number must be an integer so we tack the ".00" to the end. This method is likely slower, but inconsequential since this code never appears in any routine that needs speed. "Finding Better Ways" is the slogan of a high tech manufacturer. This wasn't finding a better way. It was finding another way - *any* way to get the job done. No need in snagging on such a small part of a program.

Covert Programming With The CIA

By Robin Harbron.

I always found the two Complex Interface Adapter (CIA) chips more frightening than the VIC and SID. They seemed to have so many functions, and no tutorial for them was to be found in the Programmer's Reference Guide. Mapping the C-64 provided somewhat better descriptions, but much still seemed vague to me.

Each CIA has 16 registers. CIA #1's registers are located from \$DC00 to

\$DD0F, while CIA #2's registers are at \$DD00 through \$DD0F.

Each CIA has two 8-bit wide data ports, which are registers where data can come in to the chip, or go out from the chip. Each of these 16 bits can be individually assigned to be input or output. These ports are used to read the keyboard and joystick ports on CIA #1, and use the User Port and Serial Bus on CIA #2. CIA #2 also controls which 16K bank the VIC looks at.

Each CIA also has a Time of Day clock that can be used to keep very accurate time. However, the C-64 operating system makes no real use of this feature - except as a seed for the random number generator.

There are also two control registers, and an interrupt control register on each CIA. These allow you to specify how the CIA should behave. It's important to note that each CIA can generate interrupts. CIA #1 generates IRQs (maskable Interrupt ReQuests), which causes the processor to stop what it's doing, and execute the code pointed to by \$FFFE/\$FFFF. CIA #2 generates NMI (Non-Maskable Interrupts) which cause the code pointed to be \$FFFA/\$FFFB to be executed.

Finally, there are two 16-bit timers on each chip. These timers can be told to count down each processor clock tick (there are approximately one million of these per second) and cause an interrupt when the timer reaches zero. This would allow events no longer than 1/15 of a second to be timed. When the C-64 is powered up, an interrupt is programmed to happen approximately 60 times per second. This interrupt is what allows TIS to be updated, the cursor to flash, the keyboard to be read, and so on. The two 16-bit timers can be combined into one 32-bit timer, which can time events as long as 72 minutes.

On to the program: Last month we figured out that most NTSC machines have 263 scan lines per frame, and each line is 65 cycles long. This multiplies to being 17,095 cycles per frame. What I tried to do is to make a stable border color change, without using any raster interrupts. I'd like to use a CIA timer to create the timing. I nearly succeeded, but the resulting program is strange. Still, I found this very interesting, and hope you will too. First we'll set TIME to equal the number of cycles between interrupts. I've subtracted 53 cycles from the total to account for the

REPLACEMENT CODE

```
40000 a=int(a*100+.5)/100:a$=str$(a)
40010 l=len(a$):ifl=len(str$(int(a)))thena$a$+".00":return
40020 ifmid$(a$,l-1,1)=". "thena$a$+a$+"0":return
40030 return
```

WEB WATCH!

CNN.COM and WWW.TVGUIDE.COM



Like NBA.COM, this site isn't on the worldwide web which is why it isn't called WWW.CNN.COM. Either address will work. CNN.COM lives up to its hype. On this page I couldn't begin to describe the wealth of information there. It's a truly interactive site, allowing you to create a web page just for you, with news important to you. It also has message boards, where people discuss current events, and chat groups every day. Heard about a train wreck in your home town? Hop on CNN.COM and search for news on it.

CNN Interactive is updated 24-hours per day, 7-days per week so you'll always have the latest news. It is a *busy* site. Their Web pages are organized into several major sections, each with its own main subject page. These sections include U.S., World, Weather, Sports, Sci-Tech, Travel, Style, Showbiz, Health and Earth. You can also visit our sister Web sites CNNfn (financial news) and AllPolitics (a partnership between CNN and Time magazine).

This site not only offers breaking stories and features, but also many months worth of archived news stories (accessible via our Search Tool). They also have information about CNN Networks and programming.

During peak hours like CNN Talkback live, the site is a bit sluggish, but has never kicked me out because of too many users.

message BOARDS

Naturally the message boards open up the forum to the masses, and despite many, many warnings from CNN, people are going to write silly posts. Still the level of intelligence here is a bit higher than I remember on Qlink.

CNN's Message boards aren't dead and automatic. They contain essays designed to brief participants on every topic, and has every possible current event and Even fringe topics. What follows is an excerpt from Their Urban Legend Message Board's intro:

...Rumors of alligators lurking in New York city sewers may be fodder for scary bed time stories, but according to Professor Jan Harold Brunvand, urban legends also play an integral part in our folklore traditions. Brunvand, author of six books chronicling the circulation of urban legends, believes these tales catch our attention because they mirror our hopes and fears. "These stories may have a kernel of truth in there somewhere, or at the very least, they are extremely believable," he says.

Ever heard of the young woman so determined to be tan for a friend's wedding that she visited several tanning salons in one day? The unfortunate young lady began to feel very ill later that night and was admitted to the local emergency room. A doctor delivered the bad news: The woman had literally cooked her insides! Fear of exploding toilets, pet dogs that are actually overgrown rats and vengeful lovers guilty of leaving more than a trail of broken hearts behind has kept people's tongues wagging for years. Cataloging these contemporary myths is what Brunvand does best. He tracks and trails the origins of these told

as true tales like a sleuth. "An urban legend is a true story that is too good to be true," Brunvand says. "They are too coincidental and too often repeated." Often urban legends allow us to talk about our fears without having to admit that we are afraid of something.

Consider the story of AIDS Mary. One version of this tale details a recently divorced man's visit to a singles bar. While ordering a drink, the man makes eye contact with a beautiful woman a few seats away from him. He initiates a conversation with her, and ends up talking to her until the bar closes. The two decide to head back to his place where they spend the night together. When the man wakes up the next morning the beautiful woman is gone, but she has left one memento of their passionate night together: The words, "welcome to the world of AIDS" are scrawled in red lipstick across his bathroom mirror.

"These stories are often framed as warnings," explains Brunvand. To verify that this story is not true, Brunvand contacted the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia. According to Chuck Fallis, a spokesman for the CDC, the AIDS Mary tale is apocryphal -- a true urban legend. We pass these stories along to each other at the water cooler, in our newspapers, television programs, movies and even on the Internet!

What urban legends have you heard lately? Author Jan Harold Brunvand is here to debunk the myth of the Urban Legend. Although he cannot answer every specific question, please look for his remarks about your favorite told as true tales throughout this message board!

That intro was followed by more than 100 urban legends submitted from around the country.

CNN's commercial calls their web site "The Godzilla Of News Websites." CNN.COM is that and more. It's also "The Godzilla Of Chat Websites" and "The Godzilla Of Message Websites." It is the most interesting and interactive and even useful website I can think of.



[HTTP://WWW.TVGUIDE.COM](http://WWW.TVGUIDE.COM) is a useful web site with useful features that frankly seems more useful than the paper mag. It too allows you to customize its service. You'll make up a password and login name and instantly get a TV listing for your area consisting of only the channels you watch, with your favorite types of shows highlighted. In the future they claim to be able to Email you a customized television itinerary so that you won't have to even visit their site.

It has a Quick pick option that tells you at a glance every show you're likely to want to see based on information you've supplied about yourself. You can submit up to six actor names and any show they appear on will pop up — even old movies.

Their database is incredible. I read an article about Claudia Christian leaving Babylon 5 and noticed that she played the temporarily possessed killer stripper in *The Hidden*, an 80s Sci-Fi Thriller that I enjoyed. I clicked on *The Hidden* and was taken to their "database" where there was a review of the ten-year old movie, with a listing of all the stars. There was Claudia Christian's name even though she played an insignificant role. I clicked on it and got a list of every movie she ever appeared in — and reviews of *them*. Impressive.

overhead of the interrupt happening, and the code that's run each time the interrupt happens.

```
*=$4000
time = 17095-53
```

Next, we'll take over the C-64, disable all interrupts and set ours to occur. First we read the interrupt control registers for both CIA chips. This is a good habit to be in, as it resets the registers so that no stray, unwanted interrupts can occur. Do this and save many headaches! Next we cancel all interrupts by storing 127 in both ICRs. Then maskable interrupts are disabled, the Kernal and BASIC ROMs are switched out, and the interrupt routine is put in the IRQ vector.

```
lda $dc0d
lda $dd0d
lda #127
sta $dc0d
sta $dd0d
sei
lda #$35
sta 1
lda #<flash
sta $ffff
lda #>flash
sta $ffff
```

Next, we poll the Raster Line Counter (at \$D012) until it reaches raster line 50. I ended up choosing this number because of the curious behavior of the program. Line 50 is the last scan line before the screen starts drawing - the last line of the border. I'm doing this so that we know that the raster is at a known point before we try to freeze the raster with the CIA IRQ.

```
lda #50
wait cmp $d012
bne wait
```

Here's the actual interrupt routine. First, CIA #1's ICR is read, to acknowledge the interrupt, and clear it. Then the border color is quickly increased, then decreased again. This ends up looking like a 4 character (or cycle, as a full 8 pixel wide character is drawn every processor cycle) long bar. Then the timer is loaded (or reloaded) with the number of cycles to count down. This in fact is not necessary to do again

and again like this, if the value is constant, as in this case. The value is "latched" in, and able to be reused. I put it in this way to make the code a more general example. Then the interrupt is enabled again, and the timer is started. Since we aren't exiting from the interrupt back to any main program, the stack has to be cleaned up manually. An RTI command usually does this work on it's own. When an interrupt occurs, the address of the code the processor was working on is pushed onto the stack, along with the processor status flags. We simply pull those back off, but don't do anything with them. Then we go into a waiting loop, until the next interrupt occurs.

```
flash lda $dc0d
inc $d020
dec $d020
lda #<time
sta $dc04
lda #>time
sta $dc05
lda #$81
ldx #$1f
sta $dc0d
stx $dc0e
plp
pla
pla
loop jmp loop
```

We run it and what happens? The little raster bar starts near the top of the screen and runs to the left and up! I tried slightly increasing and decreasing the value of the timer, but to no avail - the bar insists on moving to the left or right, as if the delay is slightly too long or too short. Strange! And even stranger, eventually the little bar wraps from the top of the screen to the bottom, and then stops at the left hand side of the screen, at the top of the bottom row of characters.

To find some answers to this, I had to do a bit of experimenting - first of all, I wanted to determine how many cycles I was off by. Well, with stopwatch in hand, I timed the bar's little journey from start to stop, and found it took 75.59 seconds. Well, I know that the location it stopped is scanline 243, and it started at scanline 50, and there are 263 scanlines all together. So that's $263 - (243 - 50) = 70$ times 65 cycles per line... which is 4550 cycles. At the rate of 60 cycles per second, it would take exactly 75.83 seconds for the bar to move that far - hey, pretty close! So it appears we are moving 1 cycle left per frame.

When I tried changing the number 53

that we subtract from 17095, I got some curious results. It seems that 53-55 produce the same result, the bar moving 1 cycle left per frame. Numbers 56-58 cause the bar to move 4 cycles left per frame, numbers 59-61 cause a 7 cycle move, and so on. It seems as if the interrupt isn't happening exactly when it should, as if it can only happen every third cycle. Why three cycles? Well, note what the processor is doing when the interrupt occurs - it's executing an endless series of JMPs. The JMP command happens to take 3 cycles to execute. And the processor does not allow itself to be interrupted in the middle of executing an opcode - it waits for the opcode to be completed. Another suspicious thing was the fact that the bar stops moving eventually - why doesn't it just stop in the first place? Well, the location that it stops at is actually the first badline (see previous articles of mine) that it encounters. Bad lines cause the processor to freeze for a time, sort of like an interrupt. It seems this affects the timing enough that the raster bar will sit in place or become "stable".

I appreciate feedback from people - Email me at robinh@arkanixlabs.com. And while you're at it, check out my web page at <http://www.tbaytel.net/macbeth> - you can see pictures of my newborn daughter Rianna :)_

The Buffer Bug In Ebud

By Jeff Jones

Assembly language programmers may want to watch out for Ebud's buffer bug. This bug has crept up and nipped at me a few times, most recently when programming *Hannibal Sector*, which had several buffers for reading blocks, undo and copying sectors. Each buffer was 256 bytes in length, but I surmise that Ebud generated smaller buffers because I was getting unexpected results. Having a buffer that's larger than necessary wouldn't cause a problem at all. I never researched what code is actually generated when you enter:

```
mybuffer .buf 256
```

I can assure you it doesn't generate

256 zeroes. Again, since it causes crashes and confusion, I imagine it generates less than 256 zeroes and perhaps throws the program counter out of line with code and variables that follow buffers. More would only make my program larger than expected. It wouldn't have my variables overwriting each other. In either case the solution is simple:

```
mybuffer .buf 128:.buf 128
```

This code does what the first should have done at the cost of a few extra keystrokes. I don't know if the problem pops up with buffers like 512 and 1024. Because of the 8-bit relevance of these particular numbers, you can imagine how a buffer-generating subroutine could stop one zero short. Or perhaps it was only meant to handle 8-bit buffers, but neglected to give an error message.

Why You Probably Shouldn't Mention Uencode To A PC User

By Jeff Jones

Recently a Commodore user offered to Email some files to Fender, here at the

LOADSTAR Tower. He explained that he would need to get the program, Uuxfer, and then process the Email. This was an example of too much information because it daunted Fender, who isn't a lover of the whole Email idea. Fender receives his Email through Judi's PC (which also prints my paycheck so I'm attached to the thing). Since she uses a premium mail reader, she has no problem saving attachments.

In the Windows world (where the masses are) the term *uencode* and even the newer *mime*, are becoming dated. Mime and uencoding are still widely used and will probably never go away. People who use Netscape Communicator or Microsoft Internet Mail are quite used to sending attachments to each other as "attachments." They don't know how they are attached and you probably couldn't explain it to the average Windows user without seeing their eyes glaze over. Commodore people are closer to their computers. We understand that Email was designed to work with a 7-bit subset of characters – alphanumeric characters. We understand that you can't send a binary file, which contains all kinds of data that can be taken as signals to end transmission. So we uencode our

ANATOMY OF AN ATTACHMENT

```
To: prowler@one.net, patrick@asterix.mathcs.wilkes.edu, bnsomni@hotmail.com,
    agonzalez@nlarredo.globalpc.net, mseelye@cpiconf.com,
    jcompton@xnet.com,
    demonix@usa.net, pvulpi@cosentini.com, chrismcb@microsoft.com,
    mpython@hard-drive-cafe.com, dross4@niu.edu, pwizard@rbdc.rbdc.com,
    macbeth@tbaytel.net, bowes3@cris.com, fungus@eskimo.com,
    clocke@interlog.com, jabberwaki@hs.wisenet.com, dale@inf.bme.hu,
    firefoot@voicenet.com, pegasus@planet.earthcom.net, phred@america.net,
    jeff@softdisk.com, rugrat@voicenet.com, count0@smaug.netwave.de,
    petars@arkanixlabs.com, ens95dwl@cs.umu.se, bacchus@fairlight.org,
    jasonw@igateway.net, mostyle@scsescapes.net, 76703.4244@compuserve.com,
    gy95maek@timra.se, necro@dreamlabs.dreaming.org, elban@waw.pdi.net,
    laszlo@kajen.com, neuromancer@snet.net, sliver@ue.eti.pg.gda.pl,
    jackrat@indy.net, np@extra.co.nz, tpinfo@eskimo.com, mikew@emc.rvt.com,
    fatman1@airmail.net, BpJamesM@ix.netcom.com
```

Subject: NTSC: Motif/Style (sda)

Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="-----442C7F7A34CC"

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

-----442C7F7A34CC

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

It is an FLI (standard) editor in case you ponder, send
The Wiz/Style feedback... !

-----442C7F7A34CC

Content-Type: application/octet-stream; name="Motif.Style.sda"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: base64
Content-Disposition: attachment; filename="Motif.Style.sda"

```
AQgQCMQhNjIwNjYgVjUuMAAAAHii/5q9Nwid+ADK0PeOEdUmNCGAan+oHYFLYQuha6Er6Bi
TAABANKfKgj9fL0sCZ3oB+jQ9+4CAe4FAYjQ7qICIU0B8CzJBpASKQGoIJoBaQaQCKognQGF
+RDjhYul/Djli4X8hYyl/ekAhf2FjSCGAab58ATG+RDFIJOB8AkmgGgiAoaLkBoIJOB8Aao
IJ0BIJoBaQFpa4WL6CCdAcgmgf1/oWmpY1l/4WNOCCGAfCmpIul/uWlh6wAsb/sYr/ojQ
+WC+6gGpAIWNPvWdAb6K1aNXvvKEPKoYIWOsfyF+gkIHfUljqT8OALG/cb8w0EQ3KT9wAfQ
1qk3hQHOMNCPG4OR0FipAI0ACCAAEiCOpkyupMHDkgf1aNYBvq9qSoyf1TFKiT70XvUIWnw
h70aQ7T2/IFIs2X7mRK7jf52f43/hwTwfRV2WYgOfoOXD8QR0YOhYsYFvBQJy9IhcYFucg
```

LOADSTAR SOFTWARE

The Compleat New Testament On Disk: All of the King James version of the New Testament in a special packed format for fast and easy searching, clipping, etc. See a demo on LS #152.

Three 1541 disks #0042D5 \$20.00

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X-Large #960325 \$15.00

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#4 One 1541 disk #049425

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#2 One 1541 disk #049225

#1 One 1541 disk #049125

\$9.95 each

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1581 disk #201223 \$30.00

1541 disk #201325 \$30.00

The Write Stuff: First class word processing. Light years ahead of Word Writer, Speedscript and others. From Busy Bee Software.

TWS C-128 #100121 \$30.00

TWS C-64 #100125 \$25.00

The Illustrator IIa: The Write Stuff (see above) and Speller (a \$10 value) Included. This TWS Add-on Allows you to incorporate graphics into your word processing documents.

Illustrator IIa C-128 #2001A5 \$40.00.

Illustrator IIa for C-64 #201125 \$35.00

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files or *convert* them so that all the characters are represented by 7-bit text characters. For instance the box on the previous page shows how Motif looked to someone receiving it on Genie when Steve Akers sent it to them. I won't of course include the entire 99-block file. He sent the file to me and a few others mime encoded. Mime is not the same as uuencoding, but the effect and intent is the same:

The letter is divided into parts that identify the attached file and the method in which it was encoded. If your mail reader is smart, it shows you none of this. On my PC, I use Microsoft Internet Mail and all I see of this letter is:

It is an FLI (standard) editor in case you ponder, send The Wiz/Style feedback... !

Beyond that, there is a paper clip icon to let me know that something is attached. I don't even know who else the Email was sent to without going out of my way to see. I'm not told whether it's mime or uuencoded. It's simply handled for me. Commodore people with shell accounts would simply issue a command and download the attached file. Here's where the divide starts. Newer PC people never remember the days when they had to run a program like Uuxfer because they are probably using Netscape, which goes through pains to hide the process from the user.

Telling some people that you're going to uuencode a file and send it to them is like telling them that you're going to use a transducer and satellite relays to network a message their way when all you have to say is that you're going to phone them. The best thing to do is simply ask a person if they have any trouble receiving file attachments. If their eyes glaze over, mail them a disk.

My sister works for IBM now and can receive text only at her desk to cut down on abuse of Email there. So some people can't receive attachments even if they know how. Another friend of mine, who works for Fox, Emails me regularly, but has much trouble with attachments. The best thing to do is establish who you can send attachments to and who you can't send them to. Even if you know the person *can* receive attachments because you're on the same service, some people are squeamish about this.

Commodore Outliners

By John Elliot

Shortly after word processors moved beyond the text editor stage in both the Commodore and ms-dos worlds, stand-alone outliners appeared. "Thinking Cap" for us, and "Think Tank" for IBMers acted like word processors, but automatically labeled and indented each level of the outline that was created.

Computer Outliner Advantages

This meant that the planner could truly brainstorm, without planning in advance the sequence of ideas, relative importance, or which idea was a subset of another. Once all the steps or ideas were typed, cutting and pasting would handle sequences. The outliner automatically numbers and indents according to these later decisions. A computer outliner makes it convenient to use this stage of planning. Before they became available I suspected that many students wrote their outline after they wrote their paper, defeating its purpose.

Why Outline?

A friend who is a "creative writer" tells me that he never prepares an outline. He often does not know what he will write until he begins that sentence. He concedes though that any technical writing he does, including articles, require planning.

When I asked my students to organize something of personal interest with Thinking Cap, one planned the stages of her wedding preparations. Another described the steps in setting up a machine tool. Several laid out the plot of a novel they were studying. Anything that requires planning could benefit from the use of an outliner.

Some educators use the "advance organizer" approach of David Ausubel. If a learner is provided in advance with an outline of what is to be learned, it will be easier to organize the new information as it is presented or discovered. This would argue for the use of an outliner by all educators. My students who dislike outliners tend to be the same ones who resist the preparation of lesson plans. They are concerned about being too restricted.

Outliner as Word Processor Feature

Some word processors added an outline feature. WordPerfect puts its outliner in its tools section. I train my students with Thinking Cap on our C-64's and then point them to the WP outline tool. Within less than a period, they are organizing outlines on both platforms.

Several Commodore word processors also ease outline creation. My Easywriter 128, The Write Stuff 128 and 64, and Paper Clip III all automatically indent and number outlines. I suspect that this may be one of their least used functions.

Thinking Cap

Of my outliners, the one with the most features is "Thinking Cap". Although it is menu driven, it has keyboard shortcuts. Its pop up help screen lists the most frequently used commands.

There are two screen viewing modes: Brainstorm and Overview. Most writing takes place in Brainstorm. Overview allows viewing and controlling of the levels that will be printed. From one to seven levels can be shown. If the "=" sign is used in Overview, only the first line of each topic will be shown. The "*" sign toggles the number or letter labels for each level on and off. Sections of the outline can be separately saved or loaded in this mode from and to any location in the outline. All other levels will be automatically renumbered. The amount of indentation that is selected for the insertion will determine its outline level.

Print mode allows either Commodore or Epson commands to be sent to the printer. With my Star 1000, and Epson ink jet, this allows such special features as underlining and bold to be used to emphasize different outliner levels. This can be done to the entire document from menus or manually to selected sections.

I have been unable to import the user files created by "Thinking Cap" to any of my word processors without also loading the screen garbage created by "Thinking Cap's" special markup language. On the other hand, since it has most of the features of a good word processor, some users might prefer to

also make it their word processor of choice.

Paperclip III

Paperclip III is one of several Commodore word processors that has an outliner feature. A “:o1+1” command turns the outliner on. “o1:” must be typed before each new level is started. If that level is maintained for several lines of text, no new commands are required. Each use of a new level command results in a new letter or numeral at that level. Five levels are available, each with its own form of labeling, from Upper Case Roman Numerals, to Upper Case Alphabetical, to regular Arabic numerals, to lower case alphabetical, to lower case Roman numerals.

It is possible to customize the level identification format, the text indentation distance, and the level label outdentation distance. Section levels can be automatically changed and renumbered simply by moving them.

Word Writer 128

Word Writer 128 also has five levels, and uses a similar variety of labels for each level.

When its outliner is turned on, the document in memory is erased, after an on screen warning. This would mean that the outline could not be blended into a standard document except after the fact. Word Writer 128 has a tab based outline system. Automatically, whatever text is entered at a particular tab distance from the left margin will be at that level of the outline. You must then use “Commodore-X” to have the level marker show on the screen. Some editing is automatic. If you remove a line, “Commodore-F” will re-label the list. “Commodore-2” shifts everything down one level and “Commodore-1” moves it up one level.

The Write Stuff

The outline can be created within a body of text since turning this function on does not erase existing text.

A reversed “ou” followed by a number up to 7 turns on the process and sets the number of levels. A reversed “ou0” turns the process off. While “ou1” would only show the main headings, “ou9” omits labels from the main

headings. Additional numbers can be added to the “ou” command to change the defaults for the amount of indentation, how far to outdent the first line, and the character to follow the label [“.”, or “)”, or shifted space]. Also modifiable are tab stops for each level and the space between the level number and identifying text.

Additional uses:

Some word processors provide either alternate text screens or split screens. It is then possible to work on two documents simultaneously. It is also possible to load the rough notes into one screen area, and turn on the outliner function in the other text area. Sections of text can then be automatically copied from the rough notes to the outliner without retyping.

There is an html command used in constructing web pages that automatically numbers lists. The outliner function of these word processors allows the same capability. All of them allow control where wished, over the default kinds of labels for each level, and the size of indentation. Anyone who worked with lists within a word processor would find this capability useful. Paper Clip III though, would require that the outline be saved to disk, and then loaded into text in a separate document.

All of the word processors do what the Overview function does in “Thinking Cap”. When the Preview or Print to Screen command is used, they show the outline layout, without showing the code commands used.

I have only described the programs I have that contain an outliner. There is at least one more stand alone Commodore outliner. There may be more outline capable word processors. I am not able to automatically create outlines with GEOS, Easy Working Word Processor or my special customized Speedscript.

Building an Outline

Actually I can simulate an outliner with my special Speedscript. I can assign to five of my number keys in this special Speedscript a sequence of letters, numbers or spaces. When “Commodore-1” is then struck, a five space indentation, an “A”, and a “.” could be automatically typed. With planning, all of the keys could be coded to provide some outliner features.

I doubt if my special Speedscript is

still available. Several word processors do though have the ability to assign a chain of characters to one key. You could build your own outliner.

Everything that I have described here could be done manually. The trouble is that so much labor is involved that few of us would bother. I think one advantage of computers is that they allow us to automate what we could do, slowly, manually. If it takes a long time to load the word processor or outliner, we will not regularly use this feature. A fast load cartridge, or non-volatile ram device does mean that within seconds after sitting down to your computer, you can plan.

I think that is the best argument for an outliner: It enables us to plan. It does make documents look nicer too.

Bookmarks

By John Elliott

At least two Commodore word processors provide a limited version of hypertext. Both use a Bookmark metaphor. There might be a reason why a writer would wish to frequently revisit the same section of text while composing the rest of a document.

If the first paragraphs outlined the arguments that would be made, it would be useful to revisit those paragraphs as those points were being expanded in the body of a document. If two versions of a statement were written, a Bookmark feature would allow easy flipping between the two statements to compare them, without the necessity of setting up a split screen or two text areas feature. If a document were long, such as a school paper, or a novel on disk, then the benefits of a bookmark are more obvious. A passage that seemed worth re-reading could be marked while it was being read for the first time. Reading could be paused so that the long document could be rejoined where the reader left off. This assumes that the reader would wish to read from the screen, rather than from a hard copy. When I obtained a disk copy of the script for the first Next Generation Star Trek movie, I tried printing it out. After 20 pages, I stopped, and began to read from the screen. A Bookmark would have also been nice.

If the computer is used as a display device, there may be another use for the

TWS OUTLINE FORMATTING

<ou7>(reversed)

The Write Stuff

:the reversed ou command followed by a number up to 7 turns on process and sets number of possible levels.

:a reverse ou0 turns the process off

:How much is displayed is determined by the initial number

:ou1 would only show the main headings

:ou9 would not show the Roman numerals for the main heading (to omit, or manually label)

:additional numbers can be used to determine amount of indentation, how far to outdent the first line, and the character to follow the number [. or) or shifted space]

:also modifiable are tab stops for each level, and the space between the level number and identifying text

:sequence if labeling (depending on heading), is Roman, caps, Arabic, lower case

:if no colon is used, the number in the starting command will determine the label

ou0

the outline can be created within a body of text

Bookmark. A comment or special word in the body of the text can be linked to an explanation of that term or an expansion on that comment. Place an instruction in the text to use the key command to go that explanation at the end of the text if the reader wishes. This hypertext like

use allows the reader to make the choice as to whether to read the aside, or continue the document. Both word processors permit returning then to the cursor position.

The Write Stuff

I. the reversed ou command followed by a number up to 7 turns on process and sets number of possible levels.

II. a reverse ou0 turns the process off

III. How much is displayed is determined by the initial number

A. ou1 would only show the main headings

B. ou9 would not show the Roman numerals for the main heading (to omit, or manually label)

C. additional numbers can be used to determine amount of indentation, how far to outdent the first line, and the character to follow the number [. or) or shifted space]

D. also modifiable are tab stops for each level and the space between the level number and identifying text

E. sequence if labeling (depending on heading), is Roman, caps, Arabic, lower case

1. if no colon is used, the number in the starting command will determine the label

the outline can be created within a body of text

Paper Clip III (For the 128 only)

The <esc> <run/stop> command marks the area of text to be revisited. Hitting the <run/stop> key afterwards returns the reader to the area marked. A second pressing of <run/stop> returns the reader to the original cursor position. There is only one bookmark per document. There is though the return to cursor position feature.

The Write Stuff 128 only

TWS allows two bookmarks. The only way to return quickly to the cursor position is to make it one of the bookmarks. <ctrl, colon> marks the first bookmark and <ctrl, semicolon> the second. <ctrl, comma> and <ctrl, period> recall these two locations.

A Homemade Bookmark

The Bookmark can be emulated by using extra steps in most word processors. If seldom used characters such as \, +, *, and @ are used as markers of important parts of text, the Hunt feature could take the reader to the desired area. This would require extra steps, and would clutter the text with additional markers. Even if a non-printing note command were used for the marker, it would only be invisible with a print to screen command or on a hard copy. Bookmarks are invisible.

It may be that the Bookmark (or TWS 128 "memorize position") command is the least used feature of either word processor. It is worth exploring.

Letters To The Editor

GoDot

Hi Jeff!

Just got through browsing LOAD-STAR Letter #48. As usual, you put out another great issue! For some reason, (not sure why), I particularly enjoyed this issue. I guess because there was a lot of stuff in there that didn't go way over my head! :-). Anyway, you mentioned that the GoDot demo would be on the next Star Extra disk (#4?). Will this also be in the .d64 format or will it be a demo for real (unemulated) 64 users to run? You also state that Walt Harned has the full version to review. Is that all we're gonna get is a

review? Or are we gonna be able to buy this program? If so, will it be through LOADSTAR? Thanks for all of the good info each month! Please keep it up!

See ya,

Norris Elwood
Clearfield, Utah

Jeff: We wouldn't dare publish a .d64 file on disk. We convert them into immediately usable Commodore formats for you. GoDot will appear on side 4 of the Star Extra #4.

Well Said!

Dear Mr. Jones,

I just finished reading and printing Soapbox from LOADSTAR #159. Bravo and well said! I truly wish you had a wider audience for this fine piece of writing. Too much of our political and social views have been shaped by the three-minute news spot and the thirty second sound bite. I hope you never fail to speak your mind in such a well thought out manner. I may not agree totally with you but I will always weigh any idea this well presented.

Kenneth Crowe

Jeff: Thanks. I actually regretted writing that editorial. I'm sure that those who don't agree with my views felt that I had no right to write it. While I had a right to write it, I feel I shouldn't have because it opens the door to cynicism. I'd hate for people to color my words from now on because they think I'm a left winger or a right winger. You won't see any more editorials like that from me.

Shouldn't Have Been Said

Dear Jeff:

I load issue #159 and go to Jeff's Soapbox to find an opinionated tirade that wastes 84 blocks. I've only had my Commodore for four years and am still a novice. I'm still learning! I would really like LOADSTAR to stick to the subject of Commodore or even PCs. The Tower seems to have lost its focus on Commodore and focused more on itself. I know very little about programming or ML, but 583 blocks free (on the 1581

version of LOADSTAR) on average for a full year translated into 18% of the disk space being unused. Add to that articles that have nothing to do with Commodore and you're looking at well over 25% wasted from my point of view, paid for and nothing received for it. With all this talk of losing Commodore users over to the PC, you would think the people in the Tower would try and appeal to the novice as well as the programmer.

Robert Banks

Jeff: LOADSTAR is a magazine. By definition we throw the kitchen sink at you and hope you like some of it. If we catered to novices, the average user would find each issue condescending. If we catered to programmers, we wouldn't have enough material for a single issue most of the time.

I subscribe to many magazines where from month to month I may appreciate only one or two articles. I never expect to read a magazine from cover to cover because every article is catering to me. Sometimes I do find an issue of Time that has a whopping five articles that I might read.

This issue of the LOADSTAR Letter mentions the Amiga and WordPerfect. There are people who will write angry letters about this while others will appreciate the humor of the WordPerfect letter that follows.

If LOADSTAR catered to novices, it would quickly become boring because from month to month you'd find yourself reading stuff that you already know.

When I decide what's going to be on the LOADSTAR Letter, I have to ask myself what information is worth sharing. So many newsletters have come and gone handing themselves over to repeated lists of peeks and pokes. I don't want to do that. I could easily write all about CMD devices every month, but not everyone owns an FD-2000 or a SuperCPU. It would be great if we all did. I was glad to find that TWS did outline this issue! I've used it for years and never knew it.

LOADSTAR indeed does cater to novices as well as programmers, but mostly through osmosis. Here and there you pick up tidbits that make you more familiar with your computer. It's using your computer that makes you more familiar with it. Every program that you simply load and run is not designed for

programmers, but for people to simply use.

My Soapbox has never been anything but an opinion column. Most editorials are such. I appreciate an opposing view, but the notion that an opinion wastes space makes no sense to me when as stated, there were 500+ blocks free. If my soapbox pushed an actual program off the disk, I'd see the point.

The 3.5-inch version of LOADSTAR has 3160 blocks of space available. From month to month we purchase so many programs of varying size. Some months we come closer than others to filling the space. But mind you, LOADSTAR is designed originally as a four-sided 1541 2000-block issue, which we do fill every month. Sometimes we rack our brains trying to figure out how to squeeze everything on the issue

The bottom line is that we only got a few interesting letters that month and so I wrote a little more in my Soapbox to fill the space not taken up by Forum.

Amiga Flak



Jason Compton

Dear Jeff,

Jason Compton: Jeff, I know that LOADSTAR Letter isn't an Amiga newsletter. And I know you prefer using Win95 now. I know you're not keeping up to date with Amiga developments and technology--so why are you making authoritative statements about the Amiga in the newsletter? I just couldn't let this pass without comment:

The article on multitasking: While the main article was fine and interesting from a historical/technical point of view, the real POINT of a discussion about multitasking on the 64 wasn't made by either you or the author. The practical definition of multitasking for an everyday

user is "Can I run multiple programs simultaneously?" The answer, with the exception of desk accessories under GEOS is a flat "no"--and even desk accessories require freezing the action of the GEOS program you're running. Pointing out all the reasons why a 64 or a 6502 are perfectly capable of multitasking aren't anything more than academic if there's nothing mainstream that takes advantage of that.

And to say that the Amiga had "limited" multitasking is really understating things, don't you think? The Amiga's multitasking is excellent. It lacks certain elements of Unix-style multitasking in favor of speed and low memory/CPU usage, but it's beyond "limited."

About GoDot: I have no problem with cheerleading for what is a very cool image processing program, but there are shareware image processors on the Amiga which well exceed GoDot's capabilities. I think the options have expanded significantly since you last took a good look at what was available. Saying that for the price you couldn't do better on the Amiga is misleading.

Jeff: I always found that doing things like printing while downloading or running two REAL programs simultaneously was iffy. What I should have said was that the Amiga DID it, but was crash prone if you pushed it. With WIN 95, I get two or more REAL things done simultaneously. You're probably right here. I own Digipaint and Deluxe Paint and found them lacking. I imagine there have to be Amiga programs now that are better for under \$100.

Jason: I still think this is a function of your very old Amiga software. I can get two or more REAL things done simultaneously, too. This is what I was complaining about--you're making statements like this but are not up to date on what the Amiga is capable of doing. Digipaint and Deluxe Paint are terrible bases of comparison to GoDot, they're paint programs, not effects programs. The core of my complaint is that you're no longer current with what the Amiga can do. Like I said, I know you prefer Win95, but you're also not up to date with the Amiga's capacities.

Jeff: It's not that I prefer Win95. I simply

need the power of my PC for my photographic work. The Amiga can DO it, but at a higher price. I'm currently into looking for some new software for my Amiga. My wife wants to use it in her office.

Jason: It would be just as annoying as if someone started spouting (as they often do): "The 64 is just a games machine which nobody's written anything for since 1985. You can't do anything useful on it, all you can use are those stupid big slow floppy drives and you're stuck with 64k of memory." We both know that's not true, but since this person obviously didn't make an effort to learn anything about the 64 over the last dozen years, that's their perception.

Jeff: I don't think I said anything comparable to that. My main point about the Amiga was not that it multitasks less or worse, but that it wasn't designed to multitask any more than any other computer. It does have multiple processors onboard, but that's not what multitasking is. Multitasking is more a function of the operating system than the computer. The Amiga has a multitasking operating system as well as help (coprocessors) for sound and graphics, standard. That doesn't make it a wizard (at multitasking) among other computers.

Jason: In LOADSTAR LETTER, no, you didn't say anything comparable--in your reply to me, though, you did. (Digipaint?? I know it's still good for stuff, but it in no way is reflective of modern Amiga programs.)

Jeff: Again, I'm not putting it down. Just attacking the notion that one computer is more adapted than another for a computing task.

Jason: To a large extent, you're right, although I seem to remember reading the documentation on the multitasking 64 OS from Europe. I forget the author's name, but he describes the extreme difficulty of multitasking on the 64 because of the solid state locations of zero page and the stack. So in that sense the 64 really is somewhat hamstrung.

That's not my main complaint with the 64 relevance of the article--I think that to be fair you should have laid out on the table

that, despite all of the academics and semantics about what a task was and so forth, the 64 does not do "consumer practical" multitasking.

Copying MS-DOS <> Commodore

Hi, Jeff:

I just received/was reading through LOADSTAR Letter # 47, and wanted to comment to "Walter" - the fellow who was having problems with his copy of Little Red Reader - (page 8 of the newsletter).

One of the quirks about *Little Red Reader* is that you have to tell it which type of disk drive your MS/DOS disk is in, i.e. is it a 1571 or a 1581. Walter said that he was having problems reading the MS/DOS disks.

If you have your MS/DOS drive defaulting to being the other type from what you are actually using, 1571 instead of 1581, or vice versa, then the program will error out on you. It does not automatically detect which type of drive your DOS disks are in.

This can be easily remedied by redefining your DOS drive, using the "M" option (MS/DOS drive option) from the LITTLE RED READER menu. After pressing "M" the program will ask you which drive unit (8,9,10,11) your MS/DOS disk is in, and then it will ask you which type of drive it is, 1571 or 1581 - and you must set this correctly or else the program won't be able to access the directory track properly.

I use both Little Red Reader (the freeware program) and Big Blue Reader (the commercial program) - and I can tell you that *Big Blue Reader* is much more flexible and powerful a program. But that is only to be expected, since LITTLE RED READER is free software.

Anyway, I just thought I'd send you this info - in case it might help Walter to more productively use his copy of LITTLE RED READER. It's a good program; you just need to know all the little ins/outs and details of its menus in order for it to function properly.

David Veatch
david.veatch@thuemmel.com

Jeff: Thanks for the tip.

Tasteless Spam Of The Year

Jeff: What follows came to me less than a week after Princess Diana died. What kind of idiot sends this – and did anyone actually respond?

SHE LIVES IN YOU.... she lives in everyone!!!

As this horrific event has unfolded, we have learned details that baffle, amaze and dumbfound even the most cynical of people.

The relentless paparazzi have placed such a low value on morality, privacy, and humanity that even in this most severe incident, taking photographs was as important as aiding another human being in a life or death situation..

It does not matter whether the paparazzi is responsible for the accident but more importantly that steps be taken so people are not put in danger like this in the future!

IN ADDITION to the paparazzi and the lack of humanity shown in this tragic event, people realize that once again alcohol has played a huge factor in the death of an icon.

Drinking and driving has been proven time and time again to be dangerous. Every time a major figurehead is taken from us viciously because of DRINKING AND DRIVING, people then stand up and shout. Let this time be different.

We can't bring Di back but it is time to make a statement and show that the public is not going to stand for this utter lack of humanity and disregard for personal safety and for the safety of those around you.

To make a statement and stand up for what you believe is not always easy. To get people to recognize the issues that you are trying to generate awareness for is sometimes even harder.

The best way to do this is to put your message right in the faces of those around you! The T-Shirts we are providing for this are OFFICIAL -- T-Shirts of the SCC.

T-Shirt #1) Front: DRINK + DRIVE =DI
Back: ISN'T IT TIME TO STOP?

T-Shirt #2) Front: HUMANITY
Back: STARTS WITH YOU

To order, please print this page and cut on the line below.

Complete all sections of the order form and mail to: Spam address deleted
MEDIUM____ LARGE____ EXTRA
LARGE____
T-SHIRT #2) ADULT SMALL____
MEDIUM____ LARGE____ EXTRA
LARGE____

T-SHIRTS COST \$20.00 FOR THE FIRST T-SHIRT AND \$17.50 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL T-SHIRT.

Tech Support Nightmare

Dear Jeff:

This is a classic. One of Dennis Doms' favorites, as I recall. Almost certainly apocryphal, but I'd like to believe it's true. :-)

==

...Dean Esmay

Actual dialog of a former WordPerfect Customer Support employee:

"Ridge Hall computer assistant; may I help you?"

"Yes, well, I'm having trouble with WordPerfect."

"What sort of trouble?"

"Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away."

"Went away?"

"They disappeared."

"Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type."

"Are you still in WordPerfect, or did you get out?"

"How do I tell?"

"Can you see the C:\ prompt on the screen?"

"What's a sea-prompt?"

"Never mind. Can you move the cursor around on the screen?"

"There isn't any cursor: I told you, it won't accept anything I type."

"Does your monitor have a power indicator?"

"What's a monitor?"

"It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?"

"I don't know."

"Well, then look on the back of the

monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Great! Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall."

"Yes, it is."

"When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?"

"No."

"Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable."

"Okay, here it is."

"Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer."

"I can't reach."

"Uh huh. Well, can you see if it is?"

"No."

"Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?"

"Oh, it's not because I don't have the right angle-it's because it's dark."

"Dark?"

"Yes-the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window."

"Well, turn on the office light then."

"I can't."

"No? Why not?"

"Because there's a power outage."

"A power...A power outage? Aha!

Okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?"

"Well, yes, I keep them in the closet."

"Good! Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from."

"Really? Is it that bad?"

"Yes, I'm afraid it is."

"Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?"

"Tell them you're too stupid to own a computer."

CORRECTION

In The LOADSTAR Letter #48, I mistakenly listed "Scott Elliott" as the author of Ten Down And Dirty Pet Tricks Part II. The Author was Todd S. Elliott.

Sorry about that, Todd.

YOU HAVE HEARD OF EBONICS, NOW HEAR HICKPHONICS.

The Atlanta School Board, sensing that Oakland is about to cash in with the "Gummit" by labelling Black slang as a language, "Ebonics," has decided to pursue some of that endless taxpayer money pipeline through Washington by designating Southern slang, or "Hickphonics," as a language to be taught in all Southern schools. A speaker of this would be a Hickophone. Here are excerpts from the Hickphonics/English dictionary:

HEIDI - noun. Greeting.
HIRE YEW - Complete sentence. Remainder of greeting.
Usage: "Heidi. Hire yew."
BARD - verb. Past tense of the infinitive "to borrow."
Usage: "My brother bard my pickup truck."
JAWJUHH - noun. A state just north of Florida. Capital is Lanner.
Usage: "My brother from Jawjuh bard my pickup truck."
BAMMER - noun. The state just west of Jawjuh. Capital id Berminhayum.
Usage: "A tornader jes went through Bammer an' left \$20,000,000 in improvements."
MUNTS - noun. A calendar division.
Usage: "My brother from Jawjuh bard my pickup truck, and I ain't herd from him in munts."
THANK - verb. Ability to cognitively process.
Usage: "Ah thank ah'll have a bare."
BARE - noun. An acloholic beverage made of barley, hops, and yeast.
Usage: "Ah thank ah'll have a bare."
IGNERT - adjective. Not smart. See "Arkansas native."
Usage: "Them N-C-TWO-A boys sure are ignert!"
RANCH - noun. A tool used for tight'nin' bolts.
Usage: "I thank I left my ranch in the back of that pickup truck my brother from Jawjuh bard a few munts ago."
ALL - noun. A petroleum-based lubricant.

Usage: "I sure hope my brother from Jawjuh puts all in my pickup truck."
FAR - noun. A conflagration.
Usage: "If my brother from Jawjuh don't change the all in my pickup truck, that things gonna catch far."
BAHS - noun. A supervisor.
Usage: "If you don't stop reading these Southern words and git back to work, your bahs is gonna far you!"
TAR - noun. A rubber wheel.
Usage: "Gee, I hope that brother of mine from Jawjuh don't git a flat tar in my pickup truck."
TIRE - noun. A tall monument.
Usage: "Lord willin' and the creek don't rise, I sure do hope to see that Eiffel Tire in Paris sometime."
RETARD - Verb. To stop working.
Usage: "My grampaw retard at age 65."
TARRED - adverb. Exhausted.
Usage: "I just flew in from Hot-lanta, and boy my arms are tarred."
FAT - noun, verb. 1. a battle or combat. 2. to engage in battle or combat.
Usage: "You younguns keep fat'n, n' ah'm gonna whup y'all."
RATS - noun. Entitled power or privilege.
Usage: "We Southerners are willin' to fat for are rats."
FARN - adjective. Not local.
Usage: "I cuddint unnerstand a wurd he sed ... must be from some farn country."
DID - adjective. Not alive.
Usage: "He's did, Jim."
EAR - noun. A colorless, odorless gas (unless you are in LA).
Usage: "He cain't breathe ... give 'im some ear!"
BOB WAR - noun. A sharp, twisted cable.
Usage: "Boy, stay away from that bob war fence."
JEW HERE - Noun and verb contraction.
Usage: "Jew here that my brother from Jawjuh got a job with that bob war fence cump'ny?"
HAZE - a contraction.
Usage: "Is Bubba smart?" "Nah ... haze ignert. He ain't thanked but a minnit 'n 'is laf."
SEED - verb, past tense.
VIEW - contraction: verb and pronoun.
Usage: "I ain't never seed New York City... view?"
HEAVY DEW - phrase. A request for action.
Usage: "Kin I heavy dew me a favor? Go bah me that Linnerd Skinnerd tape!"
GUMMIT - Noun. A bureaucratic institution.
Usage: "Them gummit boys shore are ignert."

...Jim Kowalski

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SAY.... "STUPID"

- ☺ Not the sharpest knife in the drawer.
- ☺ A few clowns short of a circus.
- ☺ A few fries short of a Happy Meal.
- ☺ An experiment in Artificial Stupidity.
- ☺ A few beers short of a six-pack.
- ☺ Dumber than a box of hair.
- ☺ A few peas short of a casserole.
- ☺ Doesn't have all his cornflakes in one box.
- ☺ The wheel's spinning, but the hamster's dead.
- ☺ One Fruit Loop shy of a full bowl.
- ☺ One taco short of a combination plate.
- ☺ A few feathers short of a whole duck.
- ☺ All foam, no beer.
- ☺ The cheese slid off his cracker.
- ☺ Body by Fisher, brains by Mattel.
- ☺ Has an IQ of 2, but it takes 3 to grunt.
- ☺ Warning: Objects in mirror are dumber than they appear.
- ☺ Couldn't pour water out of a boot with instructions on the heel.
- ☺ He fell out of the Stupid tree and hit every branch on the way down.

- ☺ An intellect rived only by garden tools.
- ☺ As smart as bait.
- ☺ Chimney's clogged.
- ☺ Doesn't have all his dogs on one leash.
- ☺ Doesn't know much but leads the league in nostril hair.
- ☺ Elevator doesn't go all the way to the top floor.
- ☺ Forgot to pay his brain bill.
- ☺ Her sewing machine's out of thread.
- ☺ His antenna doesn't pick up all the channels.
- ☺ His belt doesn't go through all the loops.
- ☺ If he had another brain, it would be lonely.
- ☺ Missing a few buttons on his remote control.
- ☺ No grain in the silo.
- ☺ Proof that evolution CAN go in reverse.
- ☺ Receiver is off the hook.
- ☺ Several nuts short of a full pouch.
- ☺ Skylight leaks a little.
- ☺ Slinky's kinked.
- ☺ Surfing in Nebraska.
- ☺ Too much yardage between the goal posts.
- ☺ In the pinball game of life, his flippers were a little further apart than most.

Why is "abbreviation" such a long word? Dean Esmay,
esmay@syndicomm.com
Syndicomm Inc. Online anagement
<http://www.syndicomm.com/>

LOADSTAR LETTER #49

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